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ABSTRACT

All facets of society--educators, citizens, students, legislators, and judges--are concerned about and interested in solving the problem of disruptive behavior in schools. The literature on the causes and effects of, and possible solutions to, the problem of disruptive behavior in the classroom focuses on the teacher, classroom climate, curriculum, and behavior patterns of children. While teachers may be the key persons in solving disruptive behavior, they must be joined in their efforts by other faculty, family, and community members to form a leadership team. First, the team needs to define the specific problem situation. Next, they should gather and analyze data on type of student behaviors particular to the school. The Disruptive Behavior Inventory can be a useful tool in this endeavor. In initiating a plan of action, the leadership team should involve all groups in the planning process, which should provide for improvement in teacher, administrative and parent behavior as well. Once an acceptable realm of student behavior has been established, an environment conducive to productive student behavior should be promoted and maintained. Parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and students can all contribute to a positive discipline program. (Author/WD)

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Maintaining Productive Student Behavior

Kevin J. Swick

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INTRODUCTION

Student behavior that disrupts classroom operation has been a constant concern of educators and citizens who take part in the educational planning process. The search for positive methods of bringing about constructive behavior on the part of students has been with us since the origins of formal education. For example, in 1928 a study was conducted to find out what kinds of misbehavior types were common among elementary schoolchildren in the United States. (44) Indeed all concerned citizens of our society are bothered by some of the student behaviors occurring in schools and classrooms. (16)

During the past five years both professional and lay groups have increased their efforts to acquire an understanding of the causes and effects of and possible solutions to the mounting disruptive behavior existent in the nation's schools. For example, the Gallup Polls of attitudes toward education in 1975 revealed that the number one concern of parents and citizens was the lack of discipline among students. (17) Likewise, classroom teachers throughout the nation have expressed their concern about the problem of disruptive behavior in the classroom. (22)

In one study conducted in 1963 the findings showed that fifty percent of the problems cited by teachers were related to the behavior patterns of the children. (25) If anything, the problems related to student behaviors in the classroom have increased as so indicated by more recent reports. (35) Recent research findings also indicate that school administrators cite disruptive student behavior as the major problem in their school systems. (12)

The breadth and depth of the concern about classroom discipline and disruptive student behavior is highlighted by the fact that urban, small town, and rural educators all express the common concern over bringing about more orderly and productive classroom learning climates. (40) The consistency of public concern with this problem is evidenced in the results of the Gallup Polls which for five consecutive years citizens have revealed one common item: classroom discipline. (16)

The status of the problem of disruptive behavior is such that educators, parents, students, citizens, legislators, and the courts have all entered into the search for some feasible solution. Indeed the ideas put forth by lay and professional groups vary from corporal punishment to an open approach to the situation. (23)

Each individual and each interest group involved in the discussion about how to bring order to the classroom conveys a philosophical position about human behavior. The examples are several. Legislators have expressed an interest in implementing a nationwide program to find out how to solve the problem of disruptive behavior. Civic-minded groups have called for more use of strict methods of handling student behavior, when disruptive of school or classroom operations. Professional educators who believe in humanistic methods of classroom management have put forth a proposal for more individualized approaches to the problem. (15, 20, 27)

This brief look at the current status of attitudes toward disruptive behavior in the schools reveals that the situation is indeed confusing. It is a positive note that all facets of the society—educators, citizens, students, legislators, and judges—are interested in attempting to solve the problem. Albeit some efforts are

very misdirected, it is also clear that much activity is being undertaken by various professional and lay groups to get at the problem of disruptive and, yes, sometimes destructive behavior of students in schools throughout the nation. (43)

One evident point that emerges from a look at the current status of the behavior problem in our schools is the varying and sometimes confusing solutions put forth to solve the problem. What is needed is an examination of the problem from the perspective of a research and application process within each school-community setting. The emotional debate over how to bring about productive behavior among students usually leads to the polarization of attitudes among those conducting the debate.

For example in the 1975 Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward education, the following were given as the 10 major concerns:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/Segregation/Busing
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Difficulty of getting good teachers
5. Size of school/classes
6. Use of drugs
7. Poor curricula
8. Crime/Vandalism/Stealing
9. Lack of proper facilities
10. Pupils' lack of interest.

An analysis of these citizen concerns reveals the complexity of the situation. Item 5 (size of school/classes) has often been viewed by educators as a possible cause of disruptive student behavior, yet few citizens have voted increased funds to finance smaller class sizes. And if a school system is inadequately financed (item 3), it is unlikely to attract good teachers (item 4). The results of the Gallup Poll indicate the need for a school-community effort in improving student behavior. (17)

The author hopes to clarify the status of constructive and destructive behavior through a study of professional literature and research studies. Utilizing this literature survey as a base, the author will provide some ideas on how educators can begin to develop a logical and orderly examination of the problem in their own district or school situation. The remaining chapters of this manuscript are an attempt toward clarifying, organizing, and implementing a process by which professional and lay personnel can begin (1) to examine disruptive behavior in their local settings and hopefully, (2) to initiate some useful procedures to improve their particular educational climates.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR: A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Disruptive student behavior is a subject of increasing concern to educators and citizens throughout our society. The success and failure of teachers and other school officials is often judged in terms of their ability to maintain effective pupil control. The maintenance of order and discipline in the classroom is at the top of the list of problems which teachers consider to be their major difficulties.

In a study conducted in 1963 it was noted by the author that over fifty percent of the problems cited by teachers in the school environment were related to the behavior of their children. It is interesting to note that the behavior patterns which distressed teachers the most were those which challenged, threatened, or violated the teacher's personal standards. (25)

Unfortunately with all of our educational advances no single solution to the problem of disruptive behavior in the classroom has been put forth at this time. Educators have been concerned with the behavior of schoolchildren for many years, but the literature reveals no single criteria that can be used to mark the border line between acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior.

It is the author's intent to present in this chapter a summary of some of the major findings of studies that deal with the causes and effects of and solutions to disruptive behavior in the classroom and school environment. In examining each aspect of disruptive behavior (causes, effects, and solutions), this report will present the major educational research findings in a summary fashion.

Causes of Disruptive Behavior

An analysis of the research reports and literate commentary on the causes of disruptive student behavior in classrooms, at various grade levels throughout the schools, reveal the following to be major causes of disruptive student behavior:

1. Teacher-student value conflicts have been reported by teachers themselves to be a cause of student behavior problems. (41)
2. The physical, mental, and social status of the student have also been shown to be significant factors in classroom behavior/misbehavior. (38)
3. Lack of teacher in-service and pre-service training to manage the classroom in terms of pupil behavior patterns. (32)
4. The negative influences of hostile home and community environments on the students have also been shown to be at the basis of behavior problems as they are enacted by students in the school. (29)
5. Inexperience on the part of the teacher in coping with discipline problems in the classroom. (First-year teachers report classroom control to be their major problem). (25)
6. Malnourished children appear more prone to be disruptive of classroom order than properly nourished children. (2)
7. Differences between teachers' expectations and students' reactions. (39)
8. Experienced teachers also report classroom management of student behavior to be a serious problem. Some authorities believe that teachers with insufficient understanding of themselves may sometimes be unable to perceive the unique personalities of individual students. (8, 24)

There are, of course, other causes of disruptive student behavior in the classroom. However, the above list of stated causes of student behavior, has been substantiated by various research studies which have been reported in the literature.

Effects of Disruptive Behavior

When there is disruptive student behavior in the classroom it affects all facets of the teaching-learning program. A survey of the research and literature reveal the following as major effects of disruptive behavior on the student, teacher, peers, and related individuals involved in the educational processes:

1. Consistent student disruption of the classroom environment can lead to a situation where the teachers spend most of their teaching time trying to control the misbehavior of the students. (9)
2. Where student behavior has been so disorderly some very capable teachers have found teaching to be impossible and left the profession for more lucrative positions in private business. (15, 36)
3. When the classroom climate is dominated by disruptive student behavior teachers and students develop negative self-concepts and show signs of mental and emotional insecurity. (32)
4. Severe disruptive behavior problems have been cited by teachers as the main impediment to effective teaching. (26)
5. A positive effect of the increasing concern of public school educators about the problem of classroom control is that teacher education programs have added segments of training which include classroom and community experiences for their students. (3, 11, 13)
6. Another positive result of the recent increase in student behavior problems is that some school districts have taken the lead in increasing counseling services for student and teachers. (31)
7. It is an established condition that in the classrooms and schools where disruptive behavior is the predominant situation, the home and community develop negative attitudes toward the school. (31)

Other effects of negative student behavior include the following: poor teaching morale, teacher-administrator conflicts, poor student morale, and lowered achievement among the student population of the school. (41)

Possible Solutions Proposed To Minimize Disruptive Behavior

There have been many ideas put forth by psychologists, sociologists, and educators as solutions to the deviant behaviors of students in all kinds of social settings including the home and the school. An examination of the literature written about solving the problem of disruptive behavior reveals that there is no single answer to the problem but rather that there are various possibilities for people to experiment with in their local school-community settings:

1. In-service education programs for teachers, parents, and school administrators which focus on increased adult sensitivity to the way in which stages of human development affect student behavior patterns. (7, 8, 40)

2. Teacher education programs that involve pre-service teachers in practice situations where they (pre-service teachers) can develop effective classroom organizational and pupil deployment skills that promote positive student behavior. (11, 13, 10)
3. Improved teacher perspectives on constructive ways to correct unruly student behavior can affect student behavior patterns in a positive way. (18)
4. Parents and teachers who organize situations in which young children develop self-management skills provide the basis for positively affecting the behavior of older students in the classroom and community. (1, 19, 28)
5. Teachers who provide a simple and clear set of rules for proper behavior (and implement these rules firmly and fairly) promote positive student behaviors in their classrooms. (4)
6. There are at least five specific approaches teachers can use in handling disruptive behavior (teacher-dominant, analytic, behavioristic, student-centered, and teacher-student interactionist) with equal effectiveness depending upon the classroom situation and the teacher's ability to use a specific approach. (14)

It is clear that educational researchers and authorities in the area of human behavior agree that there are many ways to solve the problem of disruptive student behavior. It is also very evident that student behavior is linked to the behavior of their teachers, peers, and parents. Thus any workable plan of action to improve student behavior patterns must ultimately improve the behavior of all members of the teaching-learning team.

Summary of Current Perspectives on Disruptive Behavior

Current and past perspectives on the causes and effects of and possible solutions to the problem of disruptive behavior in the classroom focus on the teacher, the sociological climate of the classroom, the curriculum, and the behavior patterns of the children.

The teacher's approach to classroom management, understanding of human development, knowledge of cultural and value differences among children, and ability to accommodate these differences in the classroom are perceived by researchers to be a key factor in solving many behavior problems in the classroom. (3, 8, 10, 11)

Similarly, researchers and writers point to the sociological climate of the school and classroom as another very important variable in handling behavior problems. A democratic environment, with understandable and reasonable rules, appears to be the most constructive environment for bringing about positive behavior among children and young people. (10, 20, 21)

Indeed curriculum arrangement which reflect student input provide a learning climate where behavior problems are minimized. Even children who have had a history of classroom problems perform more effectively in a curriculum setting where they find something they can relate to and utilize in their personal lives. (23, 31, 39)

The school and the people that make it function must continue to search for improved methods of relating and responding to the needs of all children. Yet the school alone is unable to solve all the behavior problems of children. To place the blame on the classroom teacher for delinquency, poor work habits, negative

school attitudes, and behavior problems among children and youth will accomplish nothing.

As educational researchers and writers have pointed out, the teacher may be the key person in solving disruptive behavior problems in the classroom. Yet the "learning team" must include the family, neighborhood, and community. The remaining sections of this report are devoted to a description of a process by which school and community leaders can formulate a plan of action to improve student behavior and maintain the desired student behavior once achieved.

A MODEL FOR IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN YOUR EDUCATIONAL SETTING

The literature and research findings reported in the previous two chapters indicate there is no single cause or effect of disruptive behavior within the learning setting. In the same respect there is no one solution to the problem of disruptive behavior. Rather, the literature survey and the research findings indicate that there are a variety of events and situations which cause students to behave in disruptive or destructive ways. Similarly, there are different effects of and solutions to disruptive behavior as it occurs in classroom or school situations.

Defining the Situation

One of the most significant ideas that emerges from an assessment of the current status of behavior problems in the school is the importance of defining the situation before attempting to solve it. Too often people involved in trying to find an answer to disruptive behavior fail to identify the predicament and thus have difficulty in formulating a solution which is related to their specific situation.

Disruptive Behavior: What Is It? A first step in developing a process for improving student behavior in your classroom or school is to identify and define your specific situation. Disruptive behavior, as it occurs in different school and community settings, means something different to each individual and to each interest group which is involved or concerned with the various facets of the problem. To one person the term "disruptive" means any behavior on the part of the student that interferes with the pre-planned instructional process as designed by the teacher. Yet another individual may define disruptive behavior to mean student destruction of school property. The school principal may view disruptive behavior in terms of noisy classrooms or loud cafeteria operations.

Appreciating Different Viewpoints. Each individual educator, citizen, or professional and lay group has conceptualized disruptive student behavior in personal terms. Thus in defining your specific school-community situation a first task is to identify exactly what is meant in your school and community by the term disruptive student behavior. In most cases you will find that a variety of views and ideas are held about disruptive behavior by various people who function in the school-community context.

As data is gathered on the different perceptions people have about disruptive behavior those in charge of operating the schools will acquire an understanding of the nature of the situation as it exists in their community. Such information can be valuable in providing school district staff with an overview of the school-community situation as it relates to the problem of disruptive behavior. In this way teachers and administrative staff can plan in a better way to develop programs in order to improve student behavior patterns in the district.

Data on School Behavior Patterns

Student Behavior Patterns. Another very important step in developing a program to improve student behavior in your classroom or school is the gathering of data on the kinds of student behaviors prevalent in your situation. Utilizing the information gathered on the different perceptions people have about disruptive behavior, one can establish a definition of what constitutes disruptive behavior. It is important to consider what you define as disruptive behavior since that definition will be the baseline for the data gathering process and will also reflect the kinds of student behaviors considered disruptive of the learning process in your specific classroom, school, or district.

Data Gathering Procedures. There are many ways in which to gather data on student behavior patterns in the classroom or school setting. Some of the methods are listed as follows:

1. Use of teacher-kept anecdotal records
2. Student attendance records
3. Administrative team observation records
4. School vandalism records
5. Guidance office records
6. Parent inventory on disruptive behavior
7. Student diaries or journals

These are some of the methods that can be used to gather data on student behavior patterns in the school setting. The purpose of the data-gathering process is to acquire an understanding of the status of student behaviors in a particular classroom, school, or district.

What The Data May Mean. Once a report on the status of student behavior patterns exists, the appropriate personnel in the school or district can examine and interpret what the data means in terms of disruptive behavior. This is a very critical part of the process of determining the actual situation concerning the behavior patterns of students whether in a classroom, school, or district.

A useful procedure, at this point in the planning process, is to relate your information gathered on student behavior to the various precepts of disruptive behavior exhibited by parents, educators, and citizens in their attempt to define what they meant by disruptive behavior. This comparative process will reveal important information concerning the status of behavior-misbehavior in your educational settings, as the following indicate:

1. The school or district may have only an artificial problem. Possibly parent and teacher expectations of productive student behavior are ill-founded. Young students are active learners, not robots to sit endlessly with little to do in the classroom. Middle school students are in transit to young adulthood and need diversionary activities. If such activities are considered disruptive behavior, it might be helpful to design parent education programs and in-service education programs for teachers to increase their knowledge and awareness of human development.
2. The school or district may have a more serious problem than originally revealed by parental and teacher concerns. Very possibly the data on student behavior patterns may reveal a malaise or lackadaisical attitude

among the students while teachers and parents perceive such quiet as productive.

3. The data gathered may reveal that actual behavior-disruptive behavior patterns existent in the school are concommitment with the perceptual views of parents, teachers, and citizens; thus indicating a need for developing a program to stimulate productive behavior among the student population.

Does A Problem Exist? Now that data has been collated on the student behavior patterns in the school or classroom and a corresponding concept of disruptive behavior generated among parents, educators, and citizens, it is possible to determine if a behavior problem exists and to clarify the nature of the problem. If disruptive behavior is a problem in the classroom, school, or district (and the nature of the problem has been clarified), three components of getting at the problem must be dealt with: causes, effects, and solutions. The *Disruptive Behavior Inventory** was developed to assist educational leaders in acquiring initial data on this aspect of the problem-solving process from parents, teachers, students, administrators, and citizens.

Utilizing the Disruptive Behavior Inventory

The *Disruptive Behavior Inventory* was originally developed by Swick and Howard (1974), revised by Swick and Lamb (1975) and further refined by Swick (1976). The inventory was field tested with over 2,000 teachers in 11 states. The inventory was also used in ongoing school in-service education programs to improve student behavior in three districts and presented for examination at two national educational conferences.

The *Disruptive Behavior Inventory* contains question-type statements which are designed to elicit accurate responses from teachers, parents, students, school administrators, and other interested individuals with regards to their views of the causes, effects, and possible solutions to disruptive behavior in the classroom, school, or district. The inventory is designed to elicit general ideas from people in terms of the causes, effects, and solutions to disruptive behavior. Once people have formulated their views of the overall causes, effects, and solutions to the problem they can work out more specific procedures to get at the problem.

The most effective process for utilizing the inventory is detailed as follows:

1. Develop a clear understanding among educators, parents, and citizens that a problem with student behavior does indeed exist.
2. Formulate a clearly written document identifying the nature of the disruptive behavior problem as perceived by the various members of the teaching-learning team.
3. Explain and administer the inventory to the teachers, administrators, parents, students, and citizens.
4. Tabulate the responses given on the inventory in terms of each group's profile of priority concerns as related to causes, effects, and solutions to disruptive behavior in the school or district.

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*See Appendix.

5. Examine and interpret the above data in terms of agreement and disagreement among the various groups' perceptions of the situation as so revealed by their responses on the inventory.

What the Inventory May Reveal

An analysis of the data (as accomplished in step five) may reveal various facets of the situation. Some of these possible revelations are cited below as examples of what may emerge from data generated through the use of the inventory.

1. The inventory results may reveal that each group completing the task perceive other groups to be the cause of disruptive behavior. Teachers may perceive parents to be the problem while parents may see the teaching staff to be at issue.
2. The inventory results may reveal some very common concerns of teachers, parents, and others in regard to the causes, effects, and possible solutions to disruptive behavior. For example, teachers and parents may agree that the physical setting of the school produces a climate where disruptive student behavior is encouraged.
3. As a result of utilizing the inventory it will be possible for school officials to acquire a broad perspective of what teachers, parents, and others perceive to be the major causes of disruptive behavior.

Further Uses of the Inventory

The *Disruptive Behavior Inventory* can be utilized in distinct ways to accomplish the specific goals of parents, teachers, and school administrators. The following are some examples of how various professional and parent groups can utilize the inventory results in their attempts to produce more productive student behavior in the classroom, school, or district.

Parent Use. Parents can utilize the results of their inventory tabulations to broaden their own group's understanding of student behavior, to formulate a plan for assisting the school in improving student behavior in the school, or to develop a parent education program on the role parents can play in developing positive behaviors in their children.

Teacher Use. The results of the inventory can be useful to classroom teachers in several ways. On an individual basis teachers can gain insight into their own perceptions of disruptive behavior and thus initiate a plan to improve their approach in working with students. On a group basis classroom teachers might use the data generated through the administration of the inventory to develop the framework for in-service education programs.

Administrative Use. Educational leaders will find the inventory very useful in acquiring a district-wide view of the causes and effects of and solutions to disruptive behavior as perceived by teachers and ancillary staff throughout the district. Through an examination of district-wide data generated through the use of the inventory, educational leaders can determine (1) the status of disruptive behavior,

as perceived by teachers and staff, in each school in the district, (2) how teachers and staff perceive the situation throughout the district, and (3) possible directions for district wide plans to begin to alleviate the problem of student misbehavior.

At this point in the problem-solving process the school leadership team must begin to formulate a plan of action which will focus on improving student behavior throughout the school district. It must be noted that it is very likely that in an attempt to improve student behaviors the behaviors of parents, teachers, school administrators, and citizens must also improve. Behavior acquisition by all human beings is, in part, a process of internalizing a set of behaviors modeled by other human beings.

As a result of implementing the procedures described in this chapter the school leadership team has gathered a vast array of information that, if properly organized and interpreted, can provide the basis for planning a school-community program to improve student behavior in the district. District leaders have acquired an understanding of how different groups perceive student behavior within the context of the local setting. In addition, through the data-gathering process, the school leaders have tabulated data concerning the present behavior patterns of students in the district. Finally, through the use of the *Disruptive Behavior Inventory*, district staff have been able to acquire a broad perspective of what people perceive to be the major causes and effects of and solutions to the problem of disruptive student behavior.

A Plan of Action

In initiating a plan of action to improve student behavior throughout the school district, the leadership team charged with this task will find the following suggestions and examples very useful in developing a workable and reasonable plan to meet their unique needs:

1. Involve all groups in the planning process in order to acquire a broad base for the plan of action to improve student behavior.
2. In formulating a plan of action to improve student behaviors, include in your plans provisions for improving teacher, administrative, and parent-citizenship behaviors. Modeling is still the best teaching method the profession has developed.
3. Keep in mind that no single solution to the problem of disruptive behavior exists. The planning process should focus on productive possibilities to improve student behavior, not panaceas!
4. In formulating a plan of action use a sequential process, allowing time to develop, implement, and experiment with ideas. The following is one example of such a procedure which was utilized by a elementary school in southern Illinois.

Sample Procedures Used By One School District

A. A leadership-teacher team identified the problem areas of student behaviors as perceived by teachers (through the use of the disruptive behavior inventory and building level awareness sessions), administrators (through the use of staff meetings), and parents and community (through the use of local media programs and parent-teacher-student organization meetings).

B. A School-Community Planning Committee was formed to develop a plan of action to improve student behavior; five major steps were recommended.

1. In-service teacher designed and administered programs to improve teacher skills in promoting productive student behaviors.
2. Leadership development seminars for school administrators to acquire a more realistic understanding of the classroom situation.
3. Student seminars to involve students in examining their own behavior as it is enacted in classroom settings.
4. Parent-Education-Involvement sessions which focus on clarifying for parents the status of student behavior in the school and providing parents with information on their roles in promoting more productive behavior in their children. The desired outcome of these sessions would be to develop and/or strengthen parent-teacher-student relationships concerning behavior both at home and at school.
5. Community involvement sessions where citizens can gain an understanding of the problem and acquire ideas on what they can do in the community to promote improved student behaviors.

C. Utilizing the plan of action developed by the planning committee the district leadership team requested each school in the district to adapt the plan to their specific situation. Each school was asked to organize their program to improve student behavior around the components of teachers, administrators parents, students, and citizens. The original planning committee agreed to act as a functionary for coordinating community-wide programs and to disseminate information on the programs being implemented in each school to all schools throughout the district.

Emerging Perspectives on Disruptive Behavior

By utilizing a sequential and logical approach to disruptive behavior, teachers can help improve student behavior. An organized approach of this sort involves: defining what is meant by disruptive behavior, formulating a data base on the kind and quantity of disruptive behavior existent in the school or district, locating where the disruptive behavior exists in the school or district, assessing the views of both lay citizens and professional staff as to the causes and effects of and solutions to disruptive behavior, and implementing a plan of action to improve the situation. By improving student behavior the individuals who live in the school-community context will be able to improve student behavior and in the process enrich their own views of productive human behavior. The following list of human perspectives on disruptive behavior is indicative of the kinds of attitude changes which have taken place when people become involved in the rational process of improving their own behavior:

1. An attitude change from viewing disruptive behavior as a student problem to viewing it as a problem confronting all members of the school-community setting.
2. An attitude change from viewing disruptive behavior as a one-dimensional perspective (i.e., disruptive behavior—loud, aggressive, foul language student uses) to viewing disruptive behavior from a multi-dimensional perspective (disruptive behavior—many student behavior syndromes).

3. An attitude change from the teacher defining acceptable student behavior toward the concept that productive behavior when mutually defined by teachers and students is more likely to lead to improved behaviors on the part of teachers and students.
4. An attitude change in the teacher from viewing student behavior as a possible negative force in the home, school, or community to viewing student behavior as a functional and productive force in the school-home-community context.
5. An attitude change in the parent from blaming the school toward realization that we are all involved in promoting either disruptive behavior or productive behavior in our young people.
6. An attitude change in the citizens of the community from believing the school should discipline students toward the citizens of the community taking a responsibility and role to fulfill in promoting productive student behavior in the school-community setting.
7. An attitude change in students from believing that all the school rules are worthless toward believing that there is a reason for rules and a way each of us is involved in making the rules and obeying them.
8. An attitude change in the administrators from believing good student behavior is equal to a quiet classroom toward the idea that students can be working on and discussing projects while behaving in an appropriate manner.

Through the avoidance of responding to disruptive behavior in an emotional way and utilizing instead a logical problem-solving approach to the situation, parents, teachers, students, and citizens can reduce undesirable behavior among students and adults. The next chapter contains a discussion of ideas that schools can use to maintain productive student behavior once they have attained a desirable level of positive student performance.

Sample Plan Implemented by One School Within the District

The programs implemented in different schools throughout the district varied according to the specific situation of each school. A community-wide media campaign was used to keep the public informed of the activities being used in the schools to promote improved student behavior. A sample of what one school attempted to do is briefly described as follows:

1. *Teacher Program.* Each classroom teacher devloped a contract with the school leadership team on how they would use the five teacher institute days to improve their skills in promoting productive student behavior in their classrooms. Consultants were made available to teachers where so requested and feasible in terms of cost and time.
2. *Student Program.* Three classroom teachers, the school principal, four volunteer parents, and two local YMCA officials formed a student council to develop a code of behavior for the school (twelve students were on this council).
3. *Parent Program.* The Parent-Teacher-Student Organization organized three educational sessions on the topic: Developing Positive Behaviors: It Begins With YOU! In addition volunteer parents were acquired to help with supervision of large group activities where much of the disruptive behavior had been taking place.

4. *Community Program.* The school principal, who was released from his duties one day a week for three months, organized an after-school program of work-oriented and recreation-oriented activities for students in the school. Twenty of the thirty-two businesses, churches, civic groups, and government agencies contacted agreed to contribute in some way (jobs, a place for recreation, volunteer supervision time, and so on) to the program.
5. *Administrative Program.* The principal and assistant principal developed an exchange program with some of the teachers in the school where they (the principal and assistant principal) would substitute teach for the day while the teachers administered the main office. Eventually the arrangement was to be expanded to include students and parents in the program.

These initial activities, as developed and implemented by the staff, parents, administrators, students, and citizens of this particular school-community setting, are examples of what individual schools can do in attempting to improve student behaviors. There are other program approaches that teachers can use to improve student behavior. The important thing is that such programs be developed at the local district and building levels with the involvement of all members of the learning team (parents, teachers, students, administrators, and citizens). The final section of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the attitudinal changes that can and should take place among all members of the school-community setting.

MAINTAINING PRODUCTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The development of a school-community setting conducive to promoting positive student behavior patterns is an ongoing process. Teachers renew their instructional competence by attending workshops, taking courses of study, and by observing new instructional practices in different classroom settings. In the same respects, teachers must continually examine various methods of promoting productive student behavior in their classrooms, and administrators and citizens must support and facilitate teachers in this effort. Parents and members of the community must also be involved in providing home and community settings in which positive human behavior is modeled for children and young people and where productive student behavior is expected.

The focus of the material presented in this chapter is on the basic processes parents, teachers, school administrators, and citizens of the community can use to arrive at and maintain constructive behaviors among their young children.

Defining An Acceptable Realm Of Student Behavior

In the previous chapter the focus of concern was on defining what disruptive student behavior was and on the process of involving teachers, parents, school administrators, students, and citizens in improving the behavior of students through the use of a problem-solving approach. In contrast, this chapter is devoted to an exploration of the process of maintaining productive student behavior once an acceptable realm of student behavior has been decided upon by members of the teaching-learning team.

What is an acceptable realm of productive student behavior? Is it students who are alsways quite? Or is it a more realistic goal to have students constructively involved in learning activities with some allowance for the occurence of conflict in the classroom? Each school-community group will have varying ideas about what is believed to be an acceptable realm of productive student behavior. It is extremely important for those involved in trying to bring about useful and orderly student behavior patterns to arrive at some functional definition of an acceptable realm of student behavior. Otherwise the efforts put forth by professional and lay citizens to improve student behavior will likely be lost when concern over poor behavior has waned.

One school district which the author assisted in its efforts to improve student behavior decided upon the following as an initial listing of acceptable and ideal student behaviors:

1. *Acceptable:* Student damages to the physical facilities will be kept to a minimum (occasional broken objects or defaced restroom walls).
   Ideal: Student pride is exhibited in the physical facility as indicated by their behaviors in keeping the school clean, orderly, and undamaged.
2. *Acceptable:* Student disrespect for teachers and staff is kept to occasional conflicts which are solved by teacher and student in a reasonable manner. (open and overt hostility by a student toward a teacher is nonacceptable).
   Ideal: Students and teachers show an authentic respect for each other as exhibited in their interpersonal behaviors in the classroom hallways, cafeteria, and in after school events.

3. *Acceptable:* Student-student conflicts and fights are rare events and are solved in a mutually accepted manner. (continued peer fighting is non-acceptable).
   Ideal: Students will show respect for each other as exhibited in their classroom and school-community related contacts.
4. *Acceptable:* Student behavior while on school buses will be orderly and any behavior deemed as unsafe by the bus driver is unacceptable.
   Ideal: Students will exhibit respect for all school related workers (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and others) by exhibiting positive and orderly behavior when on the bus or in the cafeteria.
5. *Acceptable:* Overt student conflicts with students form other schools during interscholastic events and other events will not be tolerated.
   Ideal: Students will exhibit respect for students from other schools by assisting visiting students in finding the facilities and by hosting a guest center for visiting students and parents.

The above list of acceptable and ideal student behaviors was one way a school district initiated efforts to provide teachers, students, staff, and parents with an idea of what they considered to be an acceptable realm of student behavior. Other school districts may find different approaches to delineating acceptable student behaviors more suitable to their situation. The important thing to remember is that each school or district should develop some baseline of appropriate student behaviors that they can utilize in their efforts to improve student behavior.

Maintaining An Environment For Productive Student Behavior

Basic to the development of long-term productive human behavior in any social setting is the constant maintenance of the environment in which human beings live, teach, and learn. The school, as a social environment, must be maintained as a place where positive student behaviors are encouraged rather than discouraged. Likewise the home and the community must also be places where young children and young adults can behave in a functional manner. The following is a list of some of the major components of the school environment that staff and students should continually examine to see if they are supportive of productive human behavior:

1. Is the physical environment of the school a safe, appealing, clean, and comfortable place for teachers and students to conduct the teaching-learning process?
2. Is the pupil-teacher ratio in classrooms (in actual classrooms not the overall ratio which is often paded by utilizing counselors, aides, and others in the mathematical computation) low enough for teachers and students to know each other personally? (A pupil-teacher ratio above 20-1 is unacceptable for the purposes of promoting sound teacher-student communication patterns in the classroom).
3. What kind of specialized counseling services are available for assisting students, teachers, and parents with special problems that occur amidst the complex society in which people exist?
4. What kind of curriculum alternatives exist for students to find something personally significant to them?

5. Are students involved in planning some part of the school experience in which they are the prime clients to be served?
6. Are classrooms organized in such a way that students have limits in which they can find meaning and also some flexibility for human error?
7. Is the school, in cooperation with parents and citizens, developing and implementing programs that educate and involve parents and citizens in the important process of promoting productive behavior among children and young people?
8. What kind of teacher-student communication patterns exist in classrooms throughout the district? (Teachers must examine their own affective behavior with students.) For example, do you as the classroom teacher involve students in instructional and extracurricular activities?
9. Are teachers, building principals, and district-wide administrative staff involved in a team effort to review their perceptions of pupil behavior in the district and, based upon these perceptions, formulating plans to maintain an instructional climate conducive to productive student behavior.
10. Are citizens of the community involved in providing effective work and recreational options in which children and young people can develop a sense of belonging so necessary for maintaining constructive behavior among all human groups.

The above question-statements provide a basis upon which teachers, parents, students, school leaders, and citizens of the community can conduct a continuous review of what they are doing to ensure the development of productive behaviors among children and young people.

In addition to the team effort aimed at maintaining constructive student behaviors in the home, school, and community there are specific contributions each member of the learning team (parents, teachers, students, school administrators, and citizens of the community) can make in their individual effort to provide a living-learning environment in which positive behaviors of children and young people emerge as a natural result of seeing and practicing functional human behavior.

Parent Involvement. Parents play a most significant role in developing and maintaining positive behavior patterns in their children. In the infant and early childhood years parents, through caring for the child and providing the needed structure vital to forming the foundations of early social learning, can set the stage for initiating productive behavior in the child. As the child proceeds through the elementary school years, parents can encourage the child to cooperate in school endeavors and through their involvement in school activities, parents can provide a model of constructive behavior for their child.

When the child is in the middle school-junior high school and high school grades, parents can assist the school in maintaining a climate for productive student behavior through their efforts at communicating some reasonable guidelines they expect their young adult to abide by and through their efforts of communicating with the school on the status of their adolescent's behavior and performance in school.

The adolescent years are when the individual is no longer a child and not yet an adult. Although young people may pretend they want little guidance from their parents at this time, in reality these young people desire and need parental guidance, support, and behavior limits in which they can grow and develop into

adulthood. Parental involvement is not a frill but a vital ingredient in the process of maintaining a climate where productive student behavior is expected and facilitated by all adults in the home-school-community setting.

Teacher Involvement. Teachers are significant individuals who affect the lives of many children and young people. The key to what happens in the classrooom is the teacher. Although the classroom teacher is unable to control the development of the child before he or she enters school, the teacher can and does set the stage for either promoting productive student behavior or encouraging disruptive behavior on the the part of students. The following are ideas classroom teachers can adapt to their specific classroom situation in their attempts to maintain a positive learning setting for students and themselves:

1. Maintain an orderly, planned, and varied instructional climate that includes materials and activities of interest to the students.
2. Work with the students in developing a useful set of guidelines to follow in terms of their classroom and school behavior.
3. Develop a personal relationship with each student in the classroom in which you focus on the positive aspects of each individual. Even when a teacher is confronted with a large class a kind word to students can go a long way toward promoting a good classroom atmosphere.
4. Maintain open communication channels with the parents of your students. Encourage parents to contact you about any facet of the life of their child as it may relate to the school setting. Keep the parents of your students informed of behavior problems that emerge in the classroom. Early recognition of a behavior problem may lead to an early plan of action to solve the problem. On the positive side teachers can provide parents with ideas on how they as parents can assist teachers in providing a classroom where student behavior is primarily of a constructive nature.
5. Develop an ability to manage your classroom behavior problems with composure and confidence. The use of humor has helped many teachers to turn a student behavior problem into a momentary human error: When a student must be disciplined, do it in a way that is fair to the student, the class, and your own self.

The teacher, through the use of a well-organized classroom, can promote positive student behavior. When students find the learning setting of value to them and when they understand the rules of order clearly, disruptive behavior is less likely to occur in the classroom. Teachers who know their student cultural orientation, intellectual abilities, and personal interests and use this information in their instructional planning are taking the first step toward maintaining a place where students can and will learn.

Administrative Involvement. The school and district administrative leadership team must assert themselves in developing and maintaining a school-community setting in which classroom teachers can carry on the process of instruction in a quality manner. Dilapidated physical facilities, over-crowded classrooms, overworked teachers and school-community tensions are factors which contribute to the emergence of behavior problems in our schools.

The leadership team in the school and the district will find the following guidelines to be helpful in their efforts to maintain the kind of setting which promotes positive pupil-teacher-parent-citizen relations.

1. Maintain well-equipped, comfortable, safe, and flexible facilities in which teachers and students can conduct the process of learning.
2. Maintain student-teacher ratios that are likely to promote a humane climate in which teachers and students can learn about each other as well as develop constructive problem-solving skills.
3. Maintain teacher work loads that allow teachers time to plan and implement an effective instructional program.
4. Maintain a staff development program that provides opportunities for teachers to develop and renew their professional skills in the areas of classroom organization and management.
5. Maintain cooperative relations with community members in terms of developing out-of-school experiences in which students can form effective work, social, and recreational behaviors.
6. Maintain useful district-wide parent-community information and discussion programs on topics of concern to parents and citizens.
7. Maintain a useable district-wide policy on expected student behaviors. Such a policy should emerge from continuous dialogue among teachers, students, parents, and citizens of the community.
8. Maintain a professional teacher center which contains resources, books and related materials teachers can use to improve their instructional programs.
9. Maintain an adequate number of capable ancillary personnel (aides, cafeteria workers, volunteers) to assist the professional staff in managing the learning climate in the positive way.
10. Maintain administrative policies supportive of teacher efforts to bring about positive student behaviors in their classrooms.

The administrative team of the school district must facilitate the teaching staff in their efforts to maintain quality environments in which students and teachers are able to perform the teaching-learning tasks.

Student Involvement. Unfortunately students are often viewed as the receivers of behavior-misbehavior responses given out by parents and teachers. Yet all human behavior is multidirectional in process—a system of giving and receiving signals in terms of specific behavioral situations. Students, depending upon their maturity and stage of development, can contribute a great deal to the process of maintaining a productive climate in the school. The following are some suggestions for involving students in the process of maintaining productive behavior in the school:

1. Utilize student advisory committees as a source of ideas in formulating school behavior policies.
2. At the classroom level involve students in the process of developing procedures to be used in evaluating student conduct while they are in the classroom.
3. When a student develops a specific behavior pattern which is disruptive of the classroom setting counsel with that student on a one to one basis.
4. Involve students in situations where they can see the value of productive behavior.
5. Where appropriate, include students in teacher-parent conferences so they can acquire a broader view of how their behavior affects other human beings.

Community Involvement. Citizens of the community can provide support to the home and school in an effort to maintain a school-home-community setting where productive student behavior is the pride of everyone. Consider the following as initial ways in which community involvement can aid the school in maintaining productive behavior among students:

1. Involve the community in activities that provide students with meaningful work and recreational experiences in their out-of-school life.
2. Use the community as a resource center by involving community members in your school or classroom activities.
3. Involving members of the community in advisory capacities on district-wide committees that have been formed to improve student behaviors in the school and community.
4. Involve community leaders in study-group sessions which focus on ways to improve the school-community relationship as it relates to improving student and adult behavior.
5. Develop and implement information sessions for citizens in which they can become better informed of ways they can assist the school in bringing about productive behavior among students.

The process of maintaining productive student behaviors within the school-community setting is a continuous challenge to all members of the teaching-learning team. The focus of this chapter has been on ways members of the team (teachers, parents, school administrators, students, and citizens) can contribute to the development and maintenance of productive human behavior. It is not enough for a school-community team to reduce disruptive student behavior. A setting where positive student behaviors can be enacted must be developed.

SUMMARY

Disruptive student behavior in classrooms and schools throughout the country has emerged as a major problem during the past decade. (16, 17) A search of studies and an examination of authoritative opinion devoted to determining causes, effects, and solutions to disruptive student behavior revealed the following points of importance.

1. Disruptive behavior has a multiple set of causal factors of which teachers, students, parents, school-community environments, and school leadership behaviors are possible ingredients. (6, 18, 26)
2. Disruptive student behavior negatively affects the student, his/her peers, the teacher, the learning setting, the parents, and the general social climate of the school and possibly the community at large. (33, 34, 43)
3. The process of eradicating disruptive student behavior must involve all members of the learning team and must focus on a rational plan of action which utilizes varied methods of improving the behavior of students as well as adults. (23, 27, 31)

A school district which desires to minimize disruptive student behavior can best accomplish this goal by utilizing a set of procedures as are listed below:

1. Formulate a definition of what is meant by the term disruptive behavior in relation to your own school-community setting.
2. Gather data from school records and through observation of student behaviors as exhibited in the schools throughout the district.
3. Assess the perceptual orientation of both professional and lay groups of people toward the student behavior patterns existent in the schools of the community.
4. Organize and implement a plan of action to minimize disruptive behavior in the schools. Such a plan of action should include input from all members of the learning team and should include everyone in some facet of the implementation process.
5. Once an acceptable status of student behavior is achieved initiate the process of maintaining and further improving student behavior patterns in the schools.

In order to avoid a continuous student behavior crisis-resolution-crisis cycle teachers and school leaders must develop and initiate programs to maintain and improve the behaviors of students and adults within the school-community setting. Such programs might utilize procedures such as the following:

1. Define the acceptable and ideal student behaviors which you aim to achieve in your classroom, school, or district.
2. Plan and implement a program of activities that will maintain acceptable student behaviors and lead students and adults toward approximating the ideal behaviors of human action.

Disruptive human behavior is complex in its causes, and the effects are generally negative. Remediation, refinement, and improvement of human behavior, whether among students, teachers, or parents, must be a continuous process in which everyone is a part of the action (planning, implementaiton, evaluation). The best measure of school-community accountability is the mirror of behavior as reflected in the young and the old. The kind of behavior seen in the mirror ultimately forms a future image upon which all of us, to some degree, behave in our daily lives.

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DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR INVENTORY

This inventory is designed to elicit responses from teachers, administrators, parents, and lay citizens as to their perceptions of the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the problems of disruptive behavior in the classroom, school, and community. In terms of this inventory, disruptive behavior is defined as:

> Any deviency by schoolchildren which breaks up the normal accepted standard of classroom conduct resulting in action prohibited by the teacher and is improper in relation to the standards of the school social system and the teacher.

Instructions

Read each statement in the inventory and circle (on the answer sheet) the response which best represents your opinion. Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NO=No Opinion, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree. Be sure to circle your choices on the answer sheet. Sample copies of the answer sheet are included at the end of the Appendix. On each section of the answer sheet there are blanks left open for you to add any narrative comments you believe important for clarifying your perceptions of the causes and effects of and possible solutions to disruptive behavior.

PART I: CAUSES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

(Reminder: Circle your choice of answers on the answer sheet)

1. Inconsistent teacher behavior in handling classroom discipline is a cause of disruptive behavior.
2. Boredom in the classroom often causes disruptive student behavior.
3. A negative teacher attitude toward deprived children is a cause of disruptive behavior.
4. Teacher use of materials that are irrelevant to the life of the child is a cause of disruptive behavior.
5. The lack of adequate classroom rules for defining appropriate behavior is a cause of disruptive behavior.
6. The lack of special services and the lack of special teachers for the special needs of children is often a cause of disruptive behavior.
7. An inadequate or unsafe classroom physical setting is often a cause of disruptive behavior.

8. Insufficient pre-service or in-service training of teachers in handling disruptive behavior is a cause of disruptive behavior.

9. An inadequate school or classroom curriculum is a cause of disruptive behavior in the classroom.

10. Home oriented problems are a major cause of disruptive behavior.

12. Ambiguous rules are a cause of disruptive behavior.

13. Physical problems of children (poor hearing, nutritional deficits, and so on) are causes of disruptive behavior.

14. Poor home life is at the base of disruptive behavior in our schools.

15. Lack of administrative support in maintaining discipline is a cause of disruptive behavior.

16. Personality and value differences between teacher and student are a cause of disruptive behavior.

17. A student's lack of training in the social skills is a cause of disruptive behavior.

18. The child's low self-concept is a cause of disruptive behavior.

19. A high teacher-pupil ratio in the classroom is a cause of disruptive behavior.

20. Inadequate teacher-parent communications about student performance in school and at home is a cause of disruptive behavior.

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS ON THE CAUSES OF DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT AND NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE LIST.

PART II: EFFECTS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

(Reminder: Please circle your choice of answers on the answer sheet.)

1. An effect of disruptive behavior on the children in the classroom is that it encourages disunity among the children,

2. An effect of disruptive behavior in the classroom is the peer conflict it causes.

3. An effect of disruptive behavior is parental dissatisfaction with the school.

4. An effect of disruptive behavior is that it often causes teachers to teach less effectively.

5. An effect of disruptive behavior is that it causes a child's self-image to be negatively effected.

6. An effect of disruptive behavior in the classroom is low teacher morale.

7. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increase in school–community conflict it causes.

8. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increased amount of time teachers spend trying to control the class.

9. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increased need to hire special resource teachers.

10. An effect of disruptive behavior is that colleges are now preparing teachers in a better way to understand the child's emotions and needs.

11. An effect of disruptive behavior is the need for police patrols in the schools.

12. An effect of disruptive behavior is the dismissal of otherwise productive teachers and administrators.

13. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increase in the number of children and young people dropping out of school.

14. An effect of disruptive behavior is the development of negative school images by parents and citizens in the community.

15. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increased need for more male teachers.

16. An effect of disruptive behavior is the student's inability to accomplish academic goals.

17. An effect of disruptive behavior is the interruption of administrative routine.

18. An effect of disruptive behavior is that it causes teacher–child conflicts.

19. An effect of disruptive behavior is the increased need for in-service training for teachers and administrators.

20. An effect of disruptive behavior is that it makes it impossible to conduct after-school activities for students.

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT AND NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE LIST.

PART III: SOLUTIONS TO DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

(Reminder: Please circle the choices you select on the answer sheet.)

1. The use of corporal punishment in handling discipline problems is a solution to disruptive behavior.

2. Making success possible for all of the children in the classroom is a solution to disruptive behavior.

3. The establishment of lower pupil-teacher ratios is a solution to disruptive behavior.

4. The use of behavior modification techniques in handling discipline problems is a solution to disruptive behavior.

5. A well-planned and varied curriculum is a solution to disruptive behavior.

6. Increasing the number of school counselors and special education teachers in the school is a solution to disruptive behavior.

7. The establishment of a time-out room for students who need a period to get away from the emotional stress of the classroom is a solution to disruptive behavior.

8. Establishing firm but fair rules in the classroom at the outset of the school year is a solution to disruptive behavior.

9. Suspension from school for children who continually break the school rules is a solution to disruptive behavior.

10. The withdrawal of different student privileges is a solution to disruptive behavior.

11. Detention halls held after school for pupils who break the school rules is a solution to disruptive behavior.

12. The use of parent-teacher conferences (especially with parents of disruptive students) is a solution to disruptive behavior.

13. The development of a student lounge and recreation area in the school is a solution to disruptive behavior.

14. Regular conferences with each child in the classroom is a solution to disruptive behavior.

15. Increased parent involvement in school activities is a solution to disruptive behavior.

16. Increased administrative and community support of teachers through the hiring of more teacher aides, supervisory peronnel, and establishment of smaller teacher work loads is a solution to disruptive behavior.

17. Parent education programs which instruct parents on proper student behavior is a solution to disruptive behavior.

18. The offering of diverse after school activities (work and recreation) is a solution to disruptive behavior.

19. Appropriate teacher modeling of positive behavior in the classroom is a solution to disruptive behavior.

20. The use of a demerit system for inappropriate student behavior is a solution to disruptive behavior.

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS ON SOLUTIONS TO DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT AND NOT INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE LIST'

SAMPLE ANSWER SHEET

Key:

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NO=No Opinion, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

I. Causes of Disruptive Behavior

1. SA A NO D SD
2. SA A NO D SD
3. SA A NO D SD
4. SA A NO D SD
5. SA A NO D SD
6. SA A NO D SD
7. SA A NO D SD
8. SA A NO D SD
9. SA A NO D SD
10. SA A NO D SD
11. SA A NO D SD
12. SA A NO D SD
13. SA A NO D SD
14. SA A NO D SD
15. SA A NO D SD
16. SA A NO D SD
17. SA A NO D SD
18. SA A NO D SD
19. SA A NO D SD
20. SA A NO D SD

II. Effects of Disruptive Behavior

1. SA A NO D SD
2. SA A NO D SD
3. SA A NO D SD
4. SA A NO D SD
5. SA A NO D SD
6. SA A NO D SD
7. SA A NO D SD
8. SA A NO D SD
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11. SA A NO D SD
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16. SA A NO D SD
17. SA A NO D SD
18. SA A NO D SD
19. SA A NO D SD
20. SA A NO D SD

III. Solutions to Disruptive Behavior

1. SA A NO D SD
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